

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-15 (Canceled)

Claim 16 (New): A reinforced silica substance comprising  
a silica glass substance comprising amorphous silica; and  
a layer comprising crystalline quartz on the silica glass substance.

Claim 17 (New): The reinforced silica substance according to Claim 16, wherein the  
layer comprising crystalline quartz is porous.

Claim 18 (New): The reinforced silica substance according to Claim 16, wherein the  
layer comprising crystalline quartz is produced by a process comprising  
coating the silica glass substance with a silica powder; and  
sintering the silica powder.

Claim 19 (New): The reinforced silica substance according to Claim 18, wherein  
more than 20 weight% of the silica powder consists of silica particles each having a  
particle size of less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$ ; and

20 weight% or less of the silica powder consists of silica particles each having a  
particle size in a range of from 10  $\mu\text{m}$  to 150  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 20 (New): The reinforced silica substance according to Claim 16, wherein the  
reinforced silica substance is a crucible.

Claim 21 (New): The reinforced silica substance according to Claim 20, wherein the crucible comprises an inside surface and an outside surface; and the layer comprising crystalline quartz is on at least part of the inside surface of the crucible.

Claim 22 (New): The reinforced silica substance according to Claim 20, wherein the crucible comprises an inside surface and an outside surface; and the layer comprising crystalline quartz is on at least part of the outside surface of the crucible.

Claim 23 (New): The reinforced silica substance according to Claim 20, wherein the layer comprising crystalline quartz is on the crucible in a ring configuration.

Claim 24 (New): A method of making a reinforced silica substance, the method comprising

coating a silica glass substance with a silica powder;  
sintering the silica powder; and  
producing the reinforced silica substance of Claim 16.

Claim 25 (New): The method according to Claim 24, wherein the sintering is at a temperature that is less than a crystallization temperature of the silica powder.

Claim 26 (New): The method according to Claim 24, wherein  
the reinforced silica substance is a crucible; and  
the sintering comprises crystallizing the silica powder by melting silicon in the  
crucible.